

March 16, 1976

SENATOR STULL: Well, Senator Lewis, I wouldn't have any objection if you want to put it over in the Department of Agriculture. We had this here in this area because we thought perhaps Mr. Kreuscher could take care of it in his budget. That's why it's there. We amended it so we wouldn't have to change it from this part of the budget to the other part.

SENATOR F. LEWIS: I'm a little deeper in than I want to be right now so I'll wait on Select File for possible amendments.

PRESIDENT: Senator Chambers.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Mr. Chairman, members of the Legislature. I would like to ask Senator Stull a question or two. Senator Stull, this provision is in the predator control portion of this bill. Gophers are not considered predators, are they?

SENATOR STULL: No sir, they're rodents.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: What is the problem that they pose that requires research? What are they trying to find out about them that they don't know now?

SENATOR STULL: During the last few years, Senator Chambers, these things have increased in population to where the mounds that they dig, they discovered that one gopher may dig as many as....

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Just a rough figure.

SENATOR STULL: One hundred mounds per year and they'll dig tunnels of 1,000 feet per year, one gopher.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: One hundred thousand feet?

SENATOR STULL: No, no. They'll dig up 100 mounds and 1,000 feet of tunnels.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: And that harms who or what?

SENATOR STULL: Well that covers your grass. The mounds cover the grass. What the gophers works underneath the soil cuts the roots off and actually they determined by fencing off certain areas and then clipping the hay and then clipping the hay where there were no gophers working, that they actually were taking a half of the forage in some instances.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Senator Stull, do you think gophers play a part in the balance of nature?

SENATOR STULL: They probably do. Probably they're out of balance out there.